

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of the above-identified patent application, in light of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested. The presently pending claims are claims 15-18. Claims 13 and 14 have been canceled. Claims 15-18 have been added.

In paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 4,188,437 to Rohowet (Rohowet). In response, the Applicant has canceled claims 13 and 14.

In paragraphs 3, 4, and 5, the Examiner rejected claims 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0162971 to Koenck et al. (Koenck) in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,899,677 to Hori et al. (Hori). In response, the Applicant has canceled claims 13 and 14.

In paragraph 6, the Examiner rejected claims 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Koenck in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,084,623 to Lewis et al. (Lewis). In response, the Applicant has canceled claims 13 and 14.

Claims 15-18 have been added to better differentiate Applicant's invention from the cited references. The added claims provide novelty over the cited references in that an ink is applied either over a stamp or on the mail article itself. The ink is reactive to the energy beam to provide an indication of completion of the sterilization process. The cited references use a label which is applied to the goods. The *entire label* provides an indication, rather than a portion of the label. The

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Applicant's invention, on the other hand, uses an ink which may be easily applied over any label, stamp or on any surface, making it easier to apply as well as providing an indication of completion of the sterilization process without obscuring the underlying design or writing. In addition, the use of a separately applied ink marking is especially useful in processing postal articles. The Applicant's invention specifically discloses the use of an ink (such as a postage metering mark) applied separately to a mail article or a stamp (see page 12, line 20-page 13, line 13 of the specification).

In addition, the added claims provide novelty over the cited references in that only a portion of the stamp is reactive to the energy beam. For example, the background of the stamp may be reactive, yet the design portion of the stamp remains the same color. By changing only a portion of the stamp, the design is much easier to read, rather than changing the color of the entire stamp (see page 9, line 22-page 10, line 4 of the specification).

CONCLUSION

For all the above reasons, the Applicant respectfully requests the reconsideration and the allowance of claims 15-18.

Respectfully submitted,



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